(b) whether it is also a fact that landless and casual agricultural labourers can be engaged in the said industry;

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether several problems may arise in promoting this industry in villages such as import of milk, powder milk and competition, etc.; and

(e) the steps Government have taken to resolve these problems and the role of Government in this regard at present?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Milk production is already an important source of income generation in rural areas. As per the study conducted by National Council of Applied Economic Research, nearly 75% of the rural households engaged in dairying are landless labourers and marginal or small farmers. Government of India is making continuous and sustained efforts to augment milk production through the following schemes:

(a) Intensive Dairy Development Programme

(b) Strengthening Infrastructrue for Quality and Clean Milk Production

(c) Assistance to Cooperatives

(d) Venture Capital Fund for Dairy and Poultry

(e) National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding

(f) Livestock Health and Disease Control

(g) Assistance to State for Feed and Fodder Development

(d) and (e) India has become a net exporter of dairy products in recent years. Greater stress is being laid on improvement in quality of milk and milk products to make them safe in domestic market as well as more acceptable at international level.

Rate Increase for Diagnostic Tests

*457. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has increased the rates of certain tests conducted at the Institute and also the rent of ICU;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for increasing the rates of various tests and the rent for ICU;

(d) whether Government propose to ask the AIIMS to review this increase and roll back to previous position in view of resistance from the general public; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILTY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (e) The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), has reviewed and rationalized the rates after a long gap of 12 years, after due consultations at various levels including the AIIMS faculty and appropriate statutory bodies. The rationalization of charges includes introduction of several new diagnostic procedures, upward and downward revision of charges. Charges of over 450 diagnostic procedures have not been revised. Even after the revision of charges, the poor patients will continue to get free treatment as hitherto. Besides, all patinents admitted in the causalty, irrespective of their economic status, will continue to get free treatment. There is no change in this provision.

Reducing prices of foodgrains

*458. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the prices of foodgrains in the open market and in the fair price shops for the same quality;

(b) if so, the results thereof;

(c) whether Government are going to reduce the prices of foodgrains as allotted to the BPL and APL families to make it effectively affordable; and

(d) the details of the steps in the pipeline, if any?